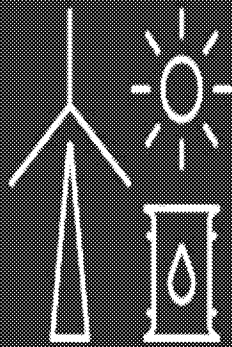


Message

From: The Washington Post
[email@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: 9/19/2019 12:35:16 PM
To: Calvino, Maria Soledad
[Calvino.Maria@epa.gov]
Subject: The Energy 202: Trump
administration wants to vet
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PowerPost

The Energy 20

Trump administration wants to vet worries about developments near parks from regional offices



BY DINO GRANDONI

with Paulina Firozi

THE LIGHTBULB



Ruins in Hovenweep National Monument in Utah. (iStock)

The Trump administration has told park superintendents around the country that they must notify Washington supervisors before issuing comments to the public about federal government when they are worried about drilling and other developments near national parks.

In an Aug. 13 memo obtained by The Washington Post, David V. Hayes, the National Park Service's acting deputy director, told field offices they need to go to headquarters in Washington if they want to submit comments to the public while considering proposals on a broad swath of issues.

Former park officials and park advocacy organizations who reviewed the memo criticized it as an effort to rein in regional officials who may object to developments such as the erection of oil rigs or cellular towers near national parks, arguing that it was hampering the experience of parkgoers.

“Certainly, it seems to be a pretty big change from the days I spent at the National Park Service,” said Phil Francis, who has served as director of Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. He is a member of the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, an advocacy group.

Jeremy Barnum, a Park Service spokesman, countered that the memo is simply clarifying existing policy and does not make any substantial change. He said park officials share information with other parts of the federal bureaucracy.

“This is not anything new,” Barnum wrote by email. “The memo vouches for common sense guidance to National Park Service managers on how to engage in consistent, productive, and timely engagement in other agencies’ projects that may affect parks and the visitor experience.”

The guidance may make it easier to allow development on government land adjacent to national parks, which are meant to give visitors a reprieve from modern life despite the fact that civilization often lurks at parks’ edges. It also allows parks abut federally controlled areas that could be used for oil drilling and grazing, which are often administered by the Bureau of Land Management. BLM and NPS are agencies in the Department of the Interior.

But a park can lose some of its wild luster with cell towers looming nearby, drillers obstructing migrating animals trying to make their way to the park, or led park superintendents to offer written feedback on proposals on park borders.

In 2017, for example, local park officials in Utah asked BLM to halt drilling on 17,000 acres of public land for drilling.

Staffers were concerned about how dust and smog from the oil and gas operations worsen air quality and obscure the night sky across the canyon-lands in southern Utah and southwestern Colorado.

“The visiting public expects high-quality experiences across federal lands, and we are concerned that continuing to offer parcels for oil and gas exploration and development in proximity to our parks will be detrimental,” wrote the superintendent of the Park Service’s Southeast Utah Group, in a letter and comment on the potential impacts to Arches and Canyonlands national monuments, Hovenweep and Canyons of the Ancients national monuments.

BLM went ahead with the sale anyway.

Further north, the outcome was different near Dinosaur National Monument, a road-filled wilderness at the Utah-Colorado border.

A proposed lease sale in 2017 at the doorstep of Dinosaur stoked controversy from both its superintendent, Mark A. Foust, and Utah Gov. Gary Herbert to environmental groups.

The bureau ultimately decided to spare two parcels from an oil and gas sale.

Natalie Levine, program manager for government affairs at the National Wildlife Conservation Association, suggested that kind of candid communication for all to read on BLM’s website — may now no longer be made without BLM guidance.

“This is limiting the public’s ability to see and hear what the Park Service is concerned about,” she said.

According to Vela’s memo, parks must submit weekly reports now and then if they plan to file official comments on any “projects that relate to

ideally giving Washington officials at least three weeks' notice before comments are sent to other agencies.

Those priorities include leasing for oil and gas, building hiking trails, protecting wildlife migration routes and constructing power lines and cell towers.

Vela said that park superintendents should be prepared to provide comments and drafts of the comments if needed. He reassured park workers that they don't rely heavily on the expertise and professional judgment of parks.

NPS spokesman Barnum noted that past administrations have said that the comments filed by field offices are in line with departmentwide priorities. "It has been the case in any administration, Washington may ask parks to review the comments they are preparing should Washington determine that more information, awareness and coordination are needed," he said. "That is not a new concept."

Francis, superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway from 2005 to 2010, said he did not need guidance from Washington higher-ups when submitting comments. He remembers writing to the U.S. Forest Service with his concerns about logging of trees near his park, which runs for nearly 500 miles through Virginia and North Carolina.

"It makes me wonder what the motive really is," Francis said. "I know there is a lot of interest in energy development."

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Commuters navigate early morning traffic in Los Angeles. (Reuters/Mike Blake/File Photo)

— **Trump vs. California:** The fight between the president and the populous state seems to have gotten worse since news broke the president intends to end California's right to set auto pollution standards.

- **State officials pledge legal action:** California Gov. Gavin Newsom held a news conference about the need to combat tailpipe pollution. "We're serious about climate change unless you're serious about vehicle emissions," he said. California Air Resources Board Chairwoman Mary Nichols added, "This is a fight of a lifetime. We have to win this." She added: "There's no question that we will be in court."
- **Trump strikes back:** Chatting late at night with reporters and the president announced the Environmental Protection Agency is suing San Francisco with an environmental violation within a week because of its large population. He didn't specify what the city is accused of violating, but the homeless population has contributed "tremendous pollution" — to the oceans, as The Post's Allyson Chiu writes.
- **"It's a terrible situation** — that's in Los Angeles and in San Francisco," the president told reporters aboard Air Force One. "We're going to sue San Francisco, they're in total violation, we're going to be giving them a lot of money soon."

Stepping back: The administration's latest move "sets up a potential challenge to the state's long-standing ability to set its own more stringent standards,"

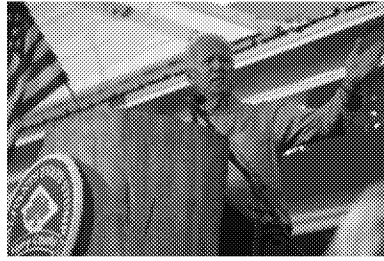
emissions and fuel efficiency, a power the courts have upheld for decades. The Post's Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis report. The president's administration's pitch that the change would lower vehicle sticker prices and encourage Americans to buy newer, safer cars.

But: The Trump team has acknowledged easing fuel-efficiency standards would increase fuel consumption "by roughly a half-million barrels of oil per day, a 1.5 percent, and would lead to an increase in greenhouse-gas emissions of about 1 percent."



Greta Thunberg to lawmakers: 'Listen to the scientists'

— **"Listen to the scientists":** Teenage Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg's testimony before the House Climate Crisis Committee and a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee continued as she joined three fellow youth climate activists. Thunberg, who submitted the landmark 2018 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in lieu of written testimony, called for climate action "like the existential crisis it is." "People in general don't seem to be taking the crisis is," she told lawmakers.



Former Vice President Joe in Galivants Ferry, S.C. (AP Photo/Meg Kinnard)

— **Climate town hall counterprogramming:** Two of the five high-profile presidential candidates skipping this week's climate town hall airing on Friday on MSNBC have their own climate-related events scheduled for the same day.

- **Joe Biden:** The former vice president is scheduled to speak at a town hall in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Friday, focusing on "climate and other issues" on Friday in Cedar Rapids, according to a Facebook event. The event is part of a series of "climate conversations" hosted by Iowa State Sen. Rob Hogg.
- **Beto O'Rourke:** The former Texas congressman's campaign said that O'Rourke is unable to attend the MSNBC forum due to a scheduling conflict. O'Rourke said he's planning to attend a youth climate strike while in D.C.

— **FEMA nominee pulled:** The White House is withdrawing its nomination of Christopher Byard to lead the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Politico reported. The White House will now nominate Peter Gaynor, who is the current acting director. A White House official said that Byard withdrew his nomination after an accusation surfaced of a sexual altercation. The official also said that the FBI determined that the accusation was "unsubstantiated," per the report.

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CONTENT FROM MIKE BLOOMBERG

Beyond Carbon: We're taking climate a

Disclaimer: Paid for by Mike Bloomberg

We can't wait to address the climate crisis, so cities, states, and communities are working now to create a 100% clean energy economy. Learn how we're moving



THERMOMETER



Angel Marshman wades through floodwaters from Tropical Depression Imelda in Galveston, Tex. (

— **Imelda drenching Texas Gulf Coast:** A tropical depression not only soaked parts of the Texas Gulf Coast with the heaviest rainfall since 1961. The region has seen life-threatening flash flooding with estimated 10 to 15 inches of rain along the Matagorda coast, where Imelda made landfall, *Post*'s Matthew Cappucci reports. Some officials in parts of Texas have said there has been a severe impact from the tropical depression but warned that the worst has passed, the *Associated Press* reports. "[W]e've got two more days of rain," Glenn LaMont, deputy emergency management coordinator in Brazoria County, said early to breathe a sigh of relief."

The latest sign of the new normal: "If it seems as if the greater Houston area is getting wetter, you're not imagining things. The nation's fourth-largest city is under the gun again Wednesday as a relentless tropical rainstorm barrels in from just southeast of the city," Cappucci writes. "...It's another puzzle piece in an alarming trend — a trend that bears the fingerprint of climate change."



DAYBOOK

Today

- The House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Conservation Management holds hearing on federal farm and disaster programs.
- The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Related Agencies holds a hearing on STEM engagement.
- The House Science, Space and Technology Committee holds a hearing on science and technology at the Environmental Protection Agency.
- The New York Times's Lisa Friedman moderates a conversation with Rep. Francis Rooney (R-Fla.) and Rep. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) from the Resources Institute.

Coming Up

- The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy holds a hearing "Building a 100 percent Clean Economy" on Friday.



EXTRA MILEAGE

— **Coming soon to a theater near you:** Mark Ruffalo and Anne Hathaway in a film called “Dark Waters” out in November that tells the story of Robert Bilott, who fought the chemical company DuPont over water contamination in West Virginia from a group of manmade chemicals called per- and polyfluorinated substances, or PFAS.



Mark Ruffalo

@MarkRuffalo

This one is special to me. It's the story of a real
And some heroes have their strength on the
inside. #DarkWaters is in theaters November 2



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Democracy Dies in Darkness